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In the San Benito Hills

Etc.

CHARLES A. GUNNISON

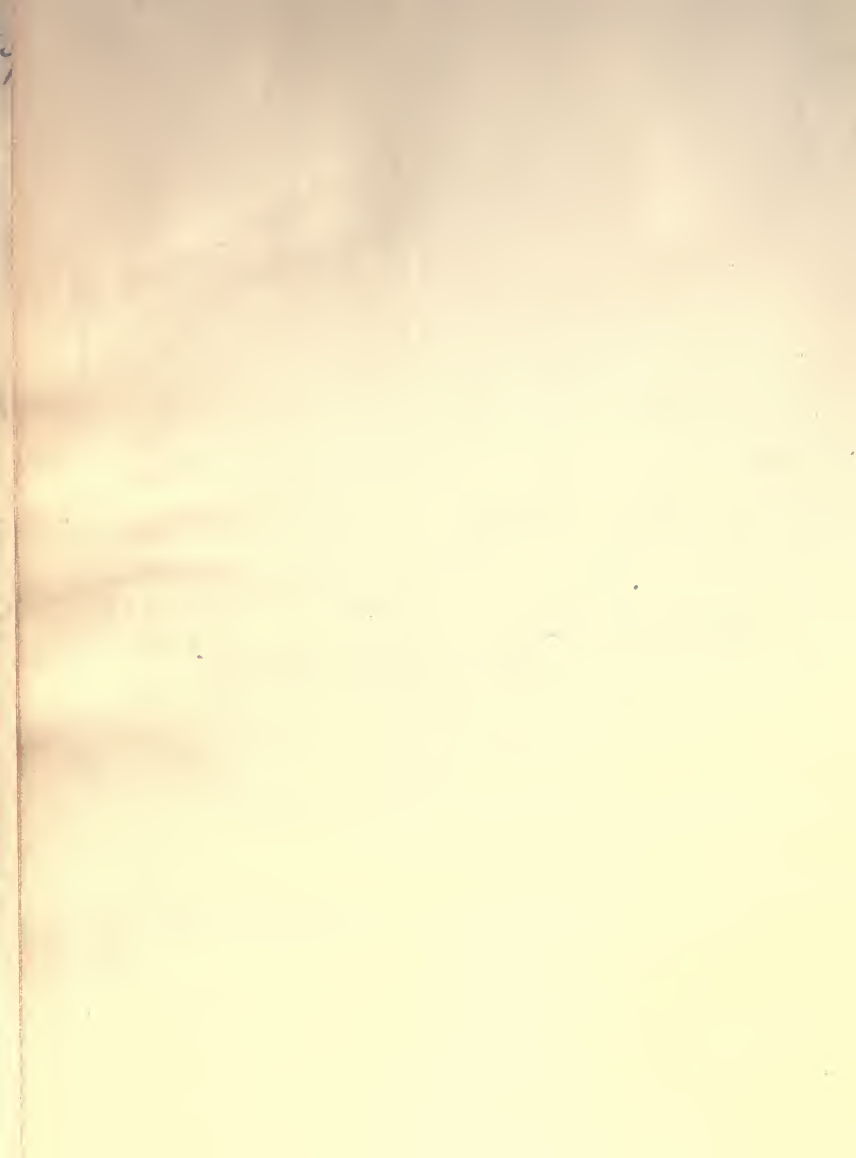


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— BY —

CHARLES A. GUNNISON.



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See also 64

PRESS OF
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TO MY
LITTLE COUSIN AND GODSON
FREDERICK GUNNISON ASTWOOD
OF
SEA VIEW, WARWICK,
BERMUDA.

1891.

To the Bermudas.

I offer all my heart in pure devotion
 To the fair, changing sea;
 I love her calms, her rage, her fierce commotion,
 Each ripple charmeth me.

In far Bermuda, by the sea surrounded,
 My grandsire, long ago,
 As sea-birds build their nests, his lone home founded
 Where the salt breezes blow.

It is his blood, touched by the brine of the ocean,
 Stays longest in my heart,
 And then flows out to thrill with fond emotion
 In every living part.

I long to see the forms of those who linger
 Still by that sea-girt nest
 Calling with ever homeward-beckoning finger
 The wanderer of the west.



In the San Benito Hills.

"Merry it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
When the deer sweeps by and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing."

It was a Friday afternoon in summer at John Fernald's ranch. The stalwart miner, his pretty little wife Mary, and, of course, the baby—for that had been omnipresent since its arrival—had been to the woods to shoot quail.

Half a dozen had been the reward, and merrily now the hunters were walking toward home, where Mary was already picturing herself broiling the delicious game, and John had a mental, life-size picture of himself eating it, while even little John looked as though he had a full set of teeth, so thoroughly he entered into the general hilarity, making a crow-

ing noise as his big father carried him Indian-fashion on his back, singing:

“Oh, Robin Hood was a bowman good,
And a bowman good was he,
And he met a maiden in merry Sherwood,
All under the greenwood tree.”

Mary skipped along by his side more like the merry maid of old Robin's days than a dignified matron.

These moments of supreme happiness are, alas, too few in most of our lives, but this young pair had many of them, and, though far from neighbors, had found no such thing as loneliness in the San Benito Hills.

Their lives were as full of brightness as the landscape was of those golden poppies which we Californians love so well, and which the book-learned, spindle-legged professors from the States vainly try to make us call by that ugly, German-Latin name with a Russian look.

“‘Now give me a kiss’ quoth Robin Hood,
‘Now give me a kiss’ quoth he,
‘For there never came maid into merry Sherwood,
‘But she paid the forester's fee.’”

Then this new Robin Hood took his fee from Mary and from little John when they reached the kitchen-door. The quail were soon dressed and broiling.



Little John was playing in a serious sort of fashion with the black top-knots, and big John cleaned his shot-gun.

How the butter sizzled as it fell on the brown breasts of the six plump fellows lying on the gridiron! How each draught from the kitchen, laden with incense to Diana the Huntress, was sweeter than laurel or jasmine to the healthy nostrils of that happy family! They wanted no pepsin or peptonized wine, no aids to digestion.

Youth, health, happiness, were theirs. God be praised!

Thus this day closed like many another, full to overflowing with sunshine.

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“Oh, dear, what can the matter be,
Oh, dear, what can the matter be,
Oh, dear, what can the matter be,
Johnny so long at the fair?”

And Mary Fernald, sitting at her kitchen-door, rocked her baby-boy in his cradle, while she searchingly gazed down the path which led to the dusty road.

It was, indeed, a beautiful picture, that mother of a year, dressed neatly in her printed cotton gown, all her household duties finished for the day, sitting in the half-light of the door-way, with the hazy land-

scape lighted by the sun just dropping behind the manzanita-covered hills.

The day had been the first on which Mary had been left alone, for John Fernald had always taken her with him the few times he had been to town since two years before, when Mary, fresh from her New England home, had come to live at his ranch in the San Benito.

Little John was, of course, too small to travel, and so, with many good-byes and good wishes, big John had gone for the day to San Juan Bautista, some twenty miles away, to buy needed farming tools.

Though Mary did not expect him until after dark, she found herself beginning to look down toward the San Juan Road long before the sun had cast western shadows under the madrona before the house.

"If I do not reach home by nine o'clock," John had said, "you may know that I have stayed in town."

It was twilight up to eight o'clock, and Mary waited at the door until the last colors disappeared from the sky, before she lighted the lamp. Once the sound of wagon-wheels made her heart beat joyfully, but the wagon passed.

She was not a timid woman, but the idea of being left for a night in the lonely ranch-house without John was not pleasant. The desperado and bandit

Vasquez was then in full power, and though he was last heard of in the Santa Cruz Mountains, his marches were so swift and in such unthought of directions, that his very name carried fear through a large tract of country where he had not as yet appeared. John's rifle hung in the kitchen, and Mary, who well understood its use, took it down and carefully examined it, then placed it in a convenient position, while she lay down, dressed, on the bed by the now sleeping baby.

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John made his purchases, not forgetting one of Mary's orders, and adding to them a neat, woolen gown and a cart for little John. The horses were weary, for the distance from San Juan Bautista was all up hill, so John drove slowly along, as he had scarcely a mile farther and it was not half-past eight.

"And fare thee weel, my only luve,
And fare thee weel for awhile;
And I will come again, my luve,
Though it were ten thousand miles."

Had John's thoughts not been at the end of the journey with Mary and the baby at that moment, he had surely heard the step of a horse behind him, as he drove into the willow-shaded stretch of road by the Arroyo Seco.

The last words of the song had hardly been ut-

tered when he was violently seized from behind, his arms tied, a gag pressed between his teeth, and a lariat wound around his legs. About a dozen men were soon around the wagon, all speaking in undertones and in the Spanish tongue.

“Who is he?” asked one.

“The American who has the Guadeloupe Rancho,” was the reply.

“Search him and leave him here in the willows. Drive the wagon off the road and take the horses; they are good.”

These orders were quickly obeyed, and John, as helpless as little John, was rolled into the reeds by the roadside.

“Shall we go to the ranch-house?” asked one.

“Yes; but one of you will be enough. There is only a woman and a child there. You go, José, and bring us all the food on a pack-horse.”

With all his strength John tried to break his bonds, but to no purpose, and the gag kept him silent. It was a time of agony to him as the party drove away as silently as they had come. John had expected them to shoot him or carry him away captive, for without doubt the band was that of the notorious Vasquez.

However, life was spared, and in his heart he gave

thanks to the Almighty, praying God to save his Mary and little one from harm.

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Mary, by the side of her boy, had fallen asleep; she had thought to remain awake until John might possibly come, but sleep overcame her.

From pleasant dreams she was suddenly awakened by a step upon the porch. Her first thought was of John.

“Who is there?” she cried.

“No matter who,” was the reply; “open the door.”

“I shall not.”

“There is no man in the house, I know, and I shall break it in.”

The answer to this speech was the report of a rifle, and the ruffian gave a cry of pain as the bullet cut his arm. Man or no man, Mary Fernald, thanks to John’s instructions, could defend herself when necessity came. Presently the rapid steps of a galloping horse were heard going down hill.

“Thank heaven that I have not killed him,” were Mary’s first words; “it would be awful to have the door-stone of our home stained with blood, even though justly shed. I should have aimed lower,” she added, as she looked at the bullet-hole in the redwood panel, just breast-high.

“He may come back with others!” Mary Fernald knelt beside her baby, who already slept, though wakened by the familiar sound of the rifle, and prayed for strength.

It was too late, she knew, for John to come that night, and she thought how happy would be their greeting in the morning when she would fall safe forever into his strong arms.

Several times she heard sounds which startled her, and even the wind, which moved the madrona branches against the roof, caused her to shudder.

The sound of horses tramping on the San Juan Road startled her once, and later the unmistakable creaking of the garden-gate, followed by a stealthy movement upon the porch, less suggesting that of a man than that of some large, wild animal.

Presently the door shook as if it would break from its hinges as the heavy body pushed against it. Mary stared with terror, holding the rifle aimed at the lower panel. A second assault followed, accompanied by a low, guttural sound—half hissing.

Sharp and quick rang out the rifle again. The house seemed to shake. From the door came a cry half-human, awful to hear in its agony. Mary fell upon her knees, covering her face in the clothes beside the frightened, wailing little John.

Oh, what will John think when he comes in the morning? I must meet him down the road by the willows to spare him the fright."

The sun shines as warm on San Benito Hills to-day as it did that morning when Mary Fernald rose from her prayers to go down the road to meet her loving John.

The awful and unknown object which lay on the porch must be passed, but she was nerved to open the door when she thought of John's fright when he should find what had occurred and not see her first.

"Yes, how brave he will call me. He will call me his little home guard."

The door turned into the kitchen; she stood irresolutely for one moment and then opened it.

Mary stood as petrified at the door—— Oh, God in heaven! I can scarce bring my pen to write.

With that one glance went out forever her love, her soul, her God. She fell upon the threshold with a moan.

Bound and gagged, John Fernald had crawled to his door over the rough, sharp stones, and there upon the porch lay in his eternal rest with a bullet through his heart.

On the Shore of the Sea of Life.

I hear the sea bird's beating wing
Upon the silver, sunlit sea
I hear her beat, beat steadily,
Counting the passing time may be,
Until she rests from laboring.

I see the fisher's little boat
Slow-gliding on with measured oar
Until her keel grates on the shore,
To rest in peace, to sail no more,
No more in currents wild to float.

I hear the distant moan of waves
I see the shadows of the clouds;
The sea-mews pass in wailing crowds;
The far off breakers seem like shrouds,
For in the sea are many graves.

But there is rippling laughter too
Along the shelly, shining sand,
My face by loving winds is fanned,
Thy waters leap to kiss my hand
Oh, merry sea of white and blue.

Thus do I sit upon the shore
And hear the music of the sea,
While everything seemeth to be
A clock that ticks incessantly
Counting till time shall be no more.

To Rudyard Kipling.

You're a dandy, you're a daisy
Rudyard, were I not so lazy
I would write in elegiacs
Four score thousand lines of praise.
Thank your stars I was born tired;
Though my soul by song is fired
I am far to weary Rudyard
For to fan it to a blaze.

But I love you for your muscle,
And the never-ending bustle
You've kicked up in one short journey
Through our "God Almighty" land,
By the much deserved, sharp spanking
You have given us, and thanking
You for all those stories stolen,
Compliment you on your sand.

Glad you knocked Chicago silly,
She deserved it, rampant filly,
Saying that she heads this nation
But you found her place of rank,
Though our land be fair as Venus,
(Here's a little joke between us,)
She's the middle of the country
And the proper place to spank!



Hashish.

Should the poor beggar, while fierce hunger gnaws,
Buy with his penny one sweet loaf of bread,
Or chance a lottery which in future draws
Some golden treasure, when, he being dead,
Can only buy his bones a marble bed?

Should weary souls, here being slaved each day,
Wait the uncertain rest of future life,
Or purchase with the all they have to pay,
Some brief oblivion from the endless strife,
Where words and looks pierce deeper than the knife?

Was not the pottage, starving Esau bought,
Better to him than all his father's lands?
Against the food, his birthright weighed for naught;
That moment when the basin touched his hands
Was worth an hour-glass of ruby sands.

The Mystery of the Red Horse Inn.

I.

It was a stormy night that of my first visit to Regensheim, the wind howled and the rain beat most furiously against the carriage windows as I drove up the main street by the Rathhaus and alighted weary and hungry at the door of the Red Horse Inn.

The Red Horse Inn was the best in Regensheim, which was but a small town and could not support a very elaborate hotel; however uninviting the old, weather-beaten house appeared from without, the cosy guest room with the great tile stove in the corner and the row of clean beer glasses with their brightly polished pewter covers hanging upon the pegs along the wall made one feel wonderfully cheerful especially with such a storm tearing away without and knocking at the window shutters.

The host's daughter brought me my half liter of beer and placing it upon the little felt mat before me with a prettily spoken, "May it taste well," returned to her seat by the tile stove, and resumed her knitting.

There was a wooden clock on the wall, one of those neat cuckoo clocks from the Black Forest, and the little bird had just gone back into his house as if he were angry to see us still sitting up although at his last appearance he had given nine warning notes for bed time. He had just gone back with a snap, as I said, when the stamping of horses and the grating of wheels were heard at the door and presently the host ushered into the room a tall man with a heavy black cloak; his appearance was foreign and after he had been in the room a short time I discovered that he spoke but little German and was a Frenchman.

He sat at the same table with me and ordered wine which was brought by the host who also placed a glass for himself at the invitation of the stranger. The Frenchman carried over his shoulder a leather traveling pocket which he took off after hanging up his coat. He threw the pocket upon a bench in the corner, where it fell heavily and gave out a sound as if it were filled with coin. I noticed the host look at it with a side casting of his eye, and then looking

at the stranger from under his bushy brows. "Rather a heavy bag that," he remarked.

"Yes," replied the Frenchman, in his broken German, "It is heavy, indeed and I must watch it carefully for it contains a good weight of Austrian gold which I must bring all the way to Paris. I did not catch the through train and so will stop over here till morning when the Paris Express leaves Nuremberg, where I shall go and take it. I should have gone through to Nuremberg to-night but the storm was too severe."

"The distance is short and can be made very quickly," answered the host.

I had disliked the host of the Red Horse from the first moment I met him; he was a short, thin man of about fifty years of age, his hair was jet black and very course, growing low upon his forehead. His complexion was sallow, excepting his large hooked nose, which seemed doubtful whether it were a nose or a carbuncle, so red and glowing was it. His eyes were small and shaded by bushy brows and he had a habit of looking at your feet when talking with you and if by accident you caught his eyes, he would immediately lower them. He was closely shaven which rendered his appearance yet more disagreeable as it gave full play to his broad mouth which had a nervous twitching about it, and he had a way

of fingering his throat while talking, making you feel as if he were itching to get his hand on your own windpipe.

The stranger drank much wine, which however did not affect him at all, it being one of the light wines of the Main vineyards.

Though asked a number of times to join in the wine I kept to my beer, not caring to mix them knowing the result next day must be a headache. I retired about half past eleven and was lighted to my chamber which was on the second floor, above the bar or guest room. The room was a large square one containing two beds, both together hardly large enough to make one good sized one at home; there was a lounge on one side, and a number of wooden chairs about the room, and a center table where the candle stood.

There were two prints on the wall, one of Andreas Hofer led to execution and the other of a funeral service in prison; these two cheerless pictures were the only decorations excepting a couple of chamoise heads in plaster of Paris. There was no carpet on the floor, as is the custom throughout Bavaria, but it was as white as possible and divided into squares with cross pieces of dark wood.

The walls were covered with a flowered paper and the ceiling was pure white, a most glaring, spotless

white; so noticeable was this whiteness, that I could not keep from looking at it in particular; while getting ready for bed, my eyes would continually seek the white ceiling which seemed to have a brightness of its own, aside from the candle light, and after the light was extinguished I saw it bare and white in the darkness.

From the window I could see that the storm was almost over and between the fast hurrying clouds, the stars would now and then peep out. I watched these clouds passing until I fell off into a gentle doze, which lasted I do not know how long, but I was not roused from it until I heard some one try my door and then muttering in a low voice go to the next room and enter closing the door with a slam, but I did not hear the lock turn. Presently I heard a heavy thud which was repeated. I recognized the sound as the same the stranger's traveling pocket had made when he threw it on the bench in the guest room, and knew then that he occupied the next room to me, He evidently threw the pocket on the table and it had fallen to the floor making the second sound. I soon heard him get into the little creaking bed, and before long he was fast asleep as I could tell by his hard breathing which I could distinctly hear.

I soon fell into a sleep again myself, despite the

uncomfortable shortness of the bedstead and the wonderful propensity the feather bed showed for falling on the floor.

While I was yet asleep I heard groans which became part of my dream, but as I gradually gained consciousness, I knew that they proceeded from the next room, but after I was fully awake I heard no more and all was still as ever.

In a few moments I heard the bells of the Rathaus ring and a shrill whistle four times repeated, so I knew it was just two o'clock; for it has been the custom in Regensheim for nine hundred years or more, to ring the bells at 2 A. M. and 2 P. M. and every hour the watchman or his wife whistles from the four sides of the tower, to the north, east, south and west. I now lay wide awake, listening for another sound, for I did not think what I had heard could authorize me to go to the next room, or to waken the landlord, for it might after all have only been a dream, or the stranger have been troubled with the nightmare.

I lay looking up at the luminous ceiling, when presently I heard a noise as of something scratching. The sound came from the ceiling and seemed at first to be in the opposite corner of the room, and at last directly above my bed. I could plainly hear a footstep advancing cautiously as if stepping from

one rafter to another; then there came a prolonged rattling just over my head and then the sound of the steps again; I listened some time but heard no more.

I should have supposed it was caused by rats running over the floor of the attic, had it not been for the footsteps.

The noises of the night, the stranger with the gold, the evil-looking host and the dreary tavern itself all combined to raise strange and disagreeable fancies in my mind and I longed for the morning to come.

I slept late, until almost eight o'clock, for I heard the little cuckoo in the guest room under me call out that hour while I was dressing.

I opened the window to let in the fresh morning air; the storm was well over and not a cloud was to be seen in the sky.

From my window I could look out over the broad fields of Pegnitz to where the Franconian Alps rose blue and misty in the distance, the great mountain with its castle at Nuremberg was visible and the towns and spires of the famous city stood glittering in the sunlight; the level valley was green and fresh after the rain and groups of peasant houses formed a pretty relief on its surface, with here and there a huge linden tree and the silvery network of little streams. The peasants were working in the fields,

while in those meadows nearest the town, I could see the robust little children tending the flocks of geese or playing with a dog. In the street just under my window sat a blind woman warming herself in the sun and knitting a blue yarn stocking, while a little golden-haired child in a red frock lay asleep across her her lap.

I dressed slowly, enjoying the beautiful picture from my window and it was fully nine o'clock when I started to go down to the guest room to my breakfast. I glanced into the next room as the door was open; the bed clothing had all been removed and the floor was wet as was also the whole length of the hall, while a pail and mop stood in one corner.

I staggered as the awful thought flashed over me; the ill-looking host had murdered the stranger for his gold and they had just washed out the blood stains from the floor.

I must have looked pale when I reached the guest room, for the daughter of the host brought me a glass of schnaps without my asking it.

"No," said I to myself, "this pretty girl can know nothing of the awful tragedy." Then aloud, I asked, "Has the French gentleman, who came last night, yet gone to Nuremburg?"

"I do not know, sir," she answered. "I have not seen him; but I think he has gone for father

went to the city and they must have gone together. Father often takes a drive with the guests," she said and laughed to herself. "Your carriage is ready at the door, it was ordered for nine o'clock. You will give us the honor of stopping with us when you return from Hoheneck?

I drank my coffee in silence and dropped the girl a silver mark when I left the house, and shivered as I entered the carriage, thinking of the awful crime which had been perpetrated under that roof by the father of the beautiful, innocent girl who stood at the door bidding me adieu.

II.

I spent about two weeks at Hoheneck Castle with most pleasant company but I could not drive from my mind the awful occurrence at the Red Horse Inn.

I had told no one of my suspicions for I had no proofs and the fear of making myself appear ridiculous deterred me from mentioning the murder. I began almost to feel that I was a sort of accomplice in the crime and my knowledge weighed heavily on my mind.

I made many inquiries about the host in Regensheim and all I learned convinced me that he was a man capable of doing anything wrong, even to the murdering of a guest if he could be the gainer thereby.

The afternoon was bright and sunshiny, when I entered Regensheim for the second time, and drove up the roughly paved street to the inn. There had been some services at the church and the people were just going home; they were all in holiday attire and presented a pretty sight as they gaily chattered and laughed, pausing now and then as they would meet some acquaintance.



Among them, I noticed the pretty daughter of the host of the Red Horse Inn; as she recognized me, she curtsied and I returned the salute.

It seemed a pity for me to expose her father and bring disgrace upon this innocent child, but it was plainly my duty to inform the police, yet I decided to wait until I had spent one more night at the inn and had had a conversation with the host, when I could mention the French gentleman and observe his face attentively to see if it disclosed any sign by which I could feel more sure that he was the murderer.

The host was at the door when I arrived and gave me a most cordial reception, taking my luggage to my room; I did not go up stairs with him but entered the guest room and took a seat at the table where I had sat the first night.

The room was quite full of peasants, both men and women, who were drinking beer and refreshing themselves, after the long sermon, with generous allowances of sausages and cheese and large white radishes. The little children, even the babies took their beer and relished it greatly.

They were all very merry, and the rosy waiter girl who helped the host's daughter was kept busy running back and forth from kitchen and cellar with sausages and beer.

I spent part of the afternoon in the guest room and also took a long walk about the town and beside the little river. In the morning I had a bottle of wine with the host; he seemed to be very merry and happy about something and drank much, becoming so boisterous before the evening had scarce begun, (and I had not mentioned the French stranger,) that he inaugurated a dance right then and there, and a fiddler being found all the guests joined in the merry making.

After watching them awhile and being too low-spirited and thoughtful to enjoy the dance, I retired to bed. The host's daughter lighted the way for me, and what was my surprise and horror when I was ushered into the very room which had been occupied by the French gentleman. I asked why I did not have the same room I had had before and added that I preferred it.

There was no reason she said, the other room was unoccupied, but her father had left my luggage in this room, but it should be changed immediately and arranged to suit me.

The bags were removed and placed in my old room where I felt more at ease, and after carefully locking the door I unpacked my luggage and got ready for bed.

The room was very close and filled with a most disagreeable odor but I did not dare to open the windows, dreading the malaria which was very prevalent in that part of Franconia. The noise down stairs continued and I saw no chance to ever getting to sleep.

Just as I was about to extinguish the candle, I casually glanced up at the ceiling which had upon my former stay attracted my particular attention on account of its immaculate whiteness; it had the same glaring appearance with the exception that just over the bed was a stained place as if made by water leaking through the roof; it had a brownish color and looked damp; the stained surface was about six feet in length and not more than two feet in width.

A strange idea flashed through my mind but I tried to drive it off for it was too awful to think of. I blew out the candle and went to bed; I lay sometime with my eyes shut, listening to the laughing and fiddling going on beneath me, above all I could hear the voice of the host and it made me shudder.

When I opened my eyes it was very dark, for I had drawn the curtains; turning over on one side I saw in the middle of the room or rather a little nearer my bed a brilliant yellow flame, it did not illuminate the place but it seemed like a dead light or luminous body without rays if such a thing could be.

I gazed at it in wonder, it kept perfectly still, it was like the flame of a candle in shape, but of the size of my hand. I had forgotten about the noise in the room beneath me, I was so interested in the tongue of flame which hung so mysteriously by my bedside.

Suddenly I sprang up with a cry of horror, for a drop of something slimy had fallen upon my face, the awful thought which had flashed through my mind when I saw the stained spot upon the ceiling came again and I, with sickening heart, bathed and bathed again my face in water. The spot where the drop had fallen seemed to burn into the flesh. I knew what that moisture must be, and my whole frame shook with horror and disgust at the revolting idea.

I lighted the candle and looked again at the ceiling, another drop of the sickening fluid was forming ready to fall upon the bed. I dressed myself hurriedly and flung open the windows to let in the air, for laden with malaria as it was, it was better than the awful air of that room where every breath was as if drawn in a charnel-house.

Yes, it was only too true; my horrible idea was the only correct one; the French stranger, whom I had met here, had been murdered for his money and his body had been dragged into the attic and laid between the rafters just over my bed; it was two

weeks since that occurred and now the frightful, brown stain upon the ceiling marked the place where the body lay, and the drop that had fallen upon my face—oh Heavens! the thought almost drove me wild.

I seized the candle and rushed from the room; along the passage I walked till I came to door at end, which I carefully opened and found a flight of ladder-like steps, these I ascended slowly after closing the door behind me.

When I reached the attic I was obliged to walk with my body bent almost double, as the beams of the roof were very low. The room which was as large as the whole width and length of the house was intensely dark and the little flame of the candle did not throw a light very far around it.

The flooring was simply the house beams, between which the laths, which held the plastering of the ceilings below, were visible; a row of boards had been laid down to make walking less difficult, yet in many places, I had to step from beam to beam very carefully.

As I neared the farther corner under which my room was situated, I noticed a long, white object laying between the beams upon the laths; as I drew nearer, with the aid of my candle which seemed to lighten up the gloom slowly as if it had to eat its

way into the darkness, I saw that it was a great piece of canvas or ducking which covered some object.

I now noticed the same odor which had annoyed me when I first entered my room that evening; about the attic were many boxes and pieces of old furniture; beside the white canvas stood a couple of barrels and against one them leaned a great club.

My heart almost ceased beating as I took hold of the white cloth and raised it, when what was my astonishment to see there, not one human body as I expected, but there, laid in order and piled one above the other, were ten or a dozen heads.

I could not look longer. I did not count them. I let fall the cloth and casting a glance at the two barrels learned their contents. Trembling so that I could scarcely carry the candle, I staggered to the door, down the stairs and along the hallway to my room, where I threw myself upon the lounge, trembling as if with a chill.

The agony I endured threw me into perspiration and I fell asleep, but every few moments I would start and shudder again.

I lay a long time thinking of how I should give information and finally, though whether it was justice or not I will not say, perhaps I was swayed by the thought of the pretty, innocent-looking face of the host's daughter, I decided not to inform the

authorities of what I had discovered, but to confront the old man himself and then he could surrender to the police.

I dressed and went down the stairs; the landlord was not yet up when I entered the guest room, but his daughter was there, washing the beer glasses which had been used the night before. I ordered the carriage to be ready at once to take me to Nuremberg and ate my breakfast hurriedly.

The girl said her father was very tired and would probably sleep till noon, so I did not awaken him; I left a short note telling him all I knew and urging him to repair the evil which had been done already, if that were possible. I did not mention the awful discovery to the pretty, innocent maiden who stood by my side as I was leaving, but I slipped a thaler in her hand and printed a kiss upon her rosy lips; but I shuddered immediately afterwards for I felt that in one way, at least, innocent as she appeared, she had much to do with the mystery of the Red Horse Inn.

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Three months later I was in Paris, and one day walking down Boulevard Hausmann I saw before my astonished eyes the very French stranger whom I had supposed murdered in Regensheim. He did not recognize me so I did not stop him, yet I drew a long breath for I was pleased to know that his head

had not been one of the heads which were concealed in the attic of the Red Horse Inn; however, it would have been rather strange if it had been, for those were cabbage heads and the awful contents of the barrel was sauer-kraut, which, having leaked through, had stained the immaculate ceiling of my room.

Thus is the mystery of the Red Horse Inn dissolved.

Let Joy be Quiet.

Two chambers has the heart
And within
Dwell Joy and Grief apart.

When Joy in hers awaketh
Grief ever
His silent slumber taketh.

Oh Joy do thou beware!
Sing lightly
Lest Grief may wake; take care!

The Piper.

The whistling South-wind comes along;
The Autumn leaves, in their colors gay,
Dance and follow his wordless song,
As those children dressed for their holiday,
Followed the Piper of Hameln town
Over the hillsides, up and down.

The water-rats and squirrels gray
Run to the musical piper's voice
To go wherever he leads the way
While birds and insects all rejoice,
As he were the Piper of Hameln town,
When the grass grows dry and the branches brown.

Would I could follow that music too
Into oblivion, far beyond
The winter of life, with this motly crew
Obeying the beck of the magic wand;
But there is no Piper of Hameln town
Can lead to the Lethe where I may drown.

Bobby Taylor's Wife.

The fellows often wonder how it was that Bobby Taylor chose a wife such as he has. I mean to say nothing against Mrs. Taylor, for, like all women she is heavenly, charming, perfect, etc., but nevertheless it seems queer to all of us that little Bobby took her. I learned the reason of it all in a very odd way. I shall not tell you how I learned it, but I tell you with pleasure how it was that Bobby won his better-half. I'll give you an inkling, though, as to how I heard it all, so that you may know my tale is true. I live in the same fashionable, private hotel as Bobby does, only I am up in the eighth story, and he and his wife are down, down below me, in the matter of floors, but way, way up in the matter of society. There are several pretty housemaids, as is proper, at this hotel, and one of them is pleased to take a motherly interest in me, and I am grateful. From red-cheeked Maggie I have the following tale, sad or merry, just as you choose to look at it.

Just here I would say: you miserable, would-be *gens de condition*, who infest big, private hotels, lookout for the housemaids, who often come pretty near to your family skeletons with their feather dusters. You may be sure that they know a few of its bones, at the very least, and if a handsome young fellow, like myself, live in the attic, you may be sure he knows also. That's the way of the world.

Bob is five feet three in his high-heeled boots, a fat, jolly, (he was once) rolly-poly dandy, whom everybody liked and petted, men as well as women. Mrs. Bob is near six feet in her, her, her—well, her black silk stockings, thin, sharp, sour, cross-grained, ugly, but charming, of course, as all women are.

“And they were married!”

Boys at school, heed the moral of this true tale! It shall show a moral somewhere, and, I hope, save you. Bob was a bad boy at school; he worried the French master with his verbs, drew anathemas instead of blessing for his mathematics, while his translations of Horace were execrable beyond all. Had he learned his Horace better he might have known the world better, though the all-singing Horace gives no quotation apropos to poor Bob's present situation. Professor Scribere, though, had the worst of it to contend with, and could vent his rage in mellifluent Italian only over the awful scrawls of

Master Bobby. No portrait of Bobby Taylor will ever appear in the back pages of our magazines to show the benefits derived from various compendiums. Too late! Too late! I do not know the god who presides over penmanship, unless it be some one of those sacred Capitoline geese whose quills may have served the Roman priests after wax tablets went out of style.

Bob's writing looked more like sound waves than anything else, and, as far as being intelligible is concerned, might be termed a visible cackle.

Providence gave quills to geese, but no hands; gave hands to man but no quills. Man, of course, must needs take those same quills, and make a goose of himself; thus are Divine arrangements knocked to pieces. When that first, ill-fated hotel was opened at beautiful Monterey, Mrs. Bob (then Miss Eva Ready), was among the guests. Bobby at that time was in his first long trowsers. Years passed. Bobby's coat grew tails, and he waltzed in the new Del Monte, no longer a polliwig, for strangely the human male reverses the order of his amphibious friends when he dons the *toga virilis*. Mrs. Bob was still there and still Eva Ready, and people began to make impudent puns on her name. Bobby Taylor was tender-hearted and a gentleman, and so picked out the most neglected girl in the room, who

was, of course, Miss Ready. Each year left her higher and dryer upon the beach, and she grew sharper and sourer as she realized that the haughtiness and ill-temper of her first seasons were bearing their fruits. It was an awful situation and called for an heroic remedy.

Bobby often, during this last season, wrote Miss Ready notes to make arrangements for Saturdays and Sundays, the only days on which he was able to be with his people at Monterey, for Bobby was a bank clerk (let me note a miracle here; his books were like copperplate), and a bank clerk is a fellow who has no more freedom than a grocer's clerk—pardon me my dear *gens de condition*, I know it is so short a time since you left the smell of your shop to rule railways and walk with princes that such allusions hurt you. Bobby wrote many indecipherable notes during the season, but Eva, having no engagement to interfere, was always ready. Bobby waited on other girls also, but Eva's lonely situation touched him.

At last the denouement came, a stunner to everybody, but most of all to poor Bobby Taylor. He wrote a note in his "off-hand" style, and sent it down by Eva's brother.

"DEAR MISS READY: I cannot come down on the morning train, as I promised, but will be on the 3:30. Please be at the hop early, by nine sure. I have some jolly friends with me; we will have a sail to-morrow. You can answer me at the dance. Be sure to say yes.

Yours,

ROBERT TAYLOR."

Eva received it and read it through. I don't know whether she got the intended sense from the scrawl, but she flew with radiant face to her mother.

"Robert Taylor has proposed to me!" she cried; "Oh, mother dear!" and mother and daughter shed tears of gratitude together.

It was not long before her brother knew, and all her female friends. All this time poor Bobby was rolling along forty miles an hour to his fate.

The next scene in this tragedy, (or comedy, if you will,) is the ball-room at Del Monte, the time 9 P. M. Very few are as yet in the room at this unusual hour. Besides a large pot of date palms sits, eagerly watching, Miss Eva Ready in pink and white, Bobby Taylor enters and walks up to his guillotine. "Robert, my own," is the greeting which startles his ears. "Your letter is in my hand. I will read it through to you, for I love each word so, that we must share it." Bobby sits by her side in wonder. He thinks the wine at dinner must have gone to his head.

“DEAR MISS READY: (‘You may call me Eva now,’ she adds, smiling archly,)—I cannot be down on the morning train, as I promised, but will come at 3:30. Please, please promise to be mine, O love. I have never dared to ask before. We will be so happy forever. You must answer me at the dance. Be sure and say yes.”

Bobby felt a cold, bony hand clasp his, and a voice whisper in his ear, “Robert, I am thine own.” “‘Why, dear,’ he would have added “Miss Ready” and an expostulation, but she stopped him. “‘Dear Robert, you are so good; this letter I shall treasure forever.” Bobby looked at it. He saw it all. It could, like a telegram or Biblical text, be read in any way. He was lost, lost, lost. Thus is the wanton negligence of your youth punished and Professor Scribere avenged. Thus it was that Bobby Taylor won his wife, or she won him. So Maggie, the housemaid, told me this morning, as she dusted the window-sill of my fashionable attic.

The Bachelor.

He does not choose a single flower
And gaze at it alone,
He does not praise two twinkling stars
As if no others shone.

Though he like beef he may like quail,
Two very different things;
And need it follow he hates ale
Because champagne he sings?

Blue eyes he loves and he loves gray,
While black seem just as fair
And he may praise on any day
Both brown or golden hair.

Thus sing he may all shades of red
Or tresses bleached or blue
E'en worship some false-fronted head
And still to all be true.

But surely some hard fate awaits,
Far worse than Adam's fall,
The man so mean he'll take no half
Because he can't have all.









